



Wellbeing Clinic Newsletter

July 2022

Today's Focus:

PAIN RELIEF

Today's newsletter has been inspired by the efforts of the US Army to introduce acupuncture as a nonpharmacological method of managing pain for their military personnel and veterans, as described in this article

<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/94087/battlefield-acupuncture-an-emerging-and-promising-alternative-to-risky-pain-medications/>.

The practice promoted by the US Army has even earned its own distinct name of "Battlefield Acupuncture". The method is said to offer an immediate pain reduction after treatment and is free from side effects associated with pharmacological drugs.

Why consider acupuncture instead of a painkiller?

Pharmacological drugs are a prevalent method of dealing with pain in Western Medicine but they have several limitations including:

- Significant short-term and long-term side effects;
- Risk of dangerous interactions with other medication;
- Risk of dependency or addiction;
- In some cases it takes several hours before the drug takes effect;
- The painkiller will only relieve pain but it will not treat the cause of the pain;

It is therefore worthwhile considering a safe and effective alternative offered by acupuncture.

So if it works for the US Army servicemen and servicewomen, will it work for me?

In short, yes, it will. But there is a lot more to say about it.

Battlefield Acupuncture method, as described in the article, is said to be a very effective method, providing **on average a decrease in pain in 82% of patients.**

That is very impressive indeed, especially noting that this particular approach appears to be a very simplified method, designed to be taught relatively quickly to practitioners with no or very limited Traditional Chinese Medicine experience and to be easily deployed in combat locations. This would be a "quick fix" that makes a perfect sense from the perspective of what US Army may require for their soldiers in battlefield conditions, where access to fully trained TCM professionals may not be available.

In fact, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has **multiple ways of efficiently dealing with pain** and a fully experienced TCM practitioner will be able to apply one of the many methods available to them, to suit best the condition to be treated. We would therefore expect the success rate of pain management by acupuncture to be much higher than what is reported for Battlefield Acupuncture method.

But what is perhaps even more important to know is that acupuncture in its traditional form will in many cases, if not most, help not only with pain management but will also efficiently **treat the cause of the pain**. As such it is likely to provide truly **long lasting health benefits** in addition to **limiting the need of using harmful pharmacological drugs.**

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